

Leader's Growth Group Homework Guide

For the week of November 5, 2017

(This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing & leading your group in discussion)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

⇒ NO GROWTH GROUPS THANKSGIVING WEEK, NOVEMBER 22-27

⇒ IMPORTANT DATES:

- Last Week of Growth Group: November 26 – December 2
- Winter Sign-Ups: January 6 & 7 and 13 & 14
- Winter Quarter: January 14 – March 17

GROUP CONNECTION AND FEEDBACK TIPS: *Make sure your group is getting time to connect, share prayer requests, and pray together. Our goal is not just to get through the Growth Group Homework. Also remember, every night you want to hear from everyone in your group. Think through how you're going to ask questions so this happens – ask various individuals what they think, go around the circle, set time limits on answers so you have time to hear from everyone.*

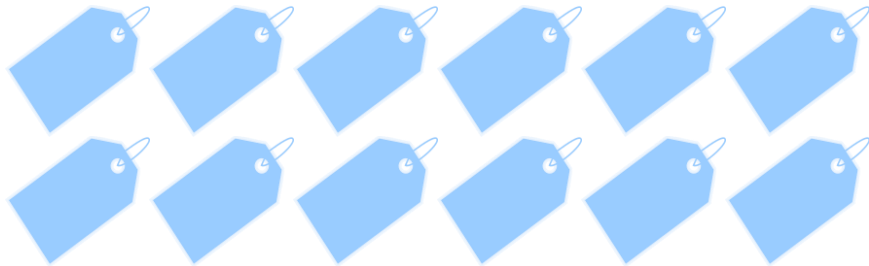
QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. We all label ourselves – for the good and bad. Take a minute and jot down the labels people attach to themselves, both positive and/or negative.

There will be a variety of answers here. Have some fun and remember, you as a leader set the tone. Having a balance of both fun, positive labels and not just negative, is key here. Labels in and of themselves are not negative. Add fun labels you've had for yourself at different points in your life and even now. Be careful of people becoming too sarcastic.



As you think of your own labels, can you look back at your life and see where they came from? If so, explain.

Good question to ask. Everyone will not have an answer.

2. Because of our guilt and shame, we all fall into the trap of hiding. Would you say you tend to hide the most from yourself, others or God?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend we saw how David dealt with the conflict between the two truths Chris mentioned. Psalm 51 is a view into David's life as he deals with the reality of his dark side and how God views him. This Psalm is his direct response to God after being found out and confronted about his affair with his neighbor's wife and the murder of her husband. As you read Psalm 51, jot down as many labels, both positive and negative, you can think of that David could have put on himself.

Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
- ⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
- ⁶ Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret place.
- ⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation

and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
 so that sinners will turn back to you.
¹⁴ Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
 you who are God my Savior,
 and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
¹⁵ Open my lips, Lord,
 and my mouth will declare your praise.
¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
 you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
¹⁷ My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
 a broken and contrite heart
 you, God, will not despise.
¹⁸ May it please you to prosper Zion,
 to build up the walls of Jerusalem.
¹⁹ Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous,
 in burnt offerings offered whole;
 then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Context: See 2 Samuel 12 to get the context of Nathan confronting David. You could also watch this clip which brings it to life:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NHBgWfBNW0>.

(Labels: sinner, worse than anyone else, always been sinful, able to be forgiven, needing God's power to change)

Additional Questions: What could be some labels or descriptions of God that David alludes to in this passage? (Labels: merciful, hurt by my sin, able to change his heart, desiring open heart and not just sacrifice.) How might these be examples of walking by "faith" and not just by "sight"?

What part of David's prayer and confession do you relate to the most?

Good question to have everyone answer. This question has some similarities to one asked about prayer a few weeks ago. If you spent time on it there, then skip down to the next few sub questions.

Most of us have not gone into the depths of darkness that David did. Do you think there could be a danger in thinking we're not as bad as David? If so, explain.

There could be a variety of answers to this question and it's designed to create some debate. The consequences of his actions toward others and himself are extremely severe and we need to call it for what it is. The more intense the violation of a person's being and worth, the greater the break in trust and the longer it takes to restore trust. It is similar to forgiving a thief for his crime. You can forgive them, but you're not going to let them back into your house very quickly. The problem comes when we begin to think we're less sinful or in less need of God's grace and forgiveness in our life than

someone else. Almost no one plans to go down a dark road like David did. It usually starts with small compromises or an inability to take an honest look at where we're headed and we suddenly see ourselves in a place we never could have imagined.

Additional Verses: These verses could add to your discussion:

1 Corinthians 10:12 - ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

Romans 3:23 - ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Isaiah 59:1-2 - Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Romans 13:9 - ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Proverbs 27:5-6 - ⁵ Better is open rebuke than hidden love. ⁶ Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Can you think of any modern day examples of how we confuse sacrifice with a broken or contrite spirit as seen in verses 16 & 17?

The point of this passage is that while we say we make a sacrifice to follow God, our heart isn't open to what God wants for each us. Examples would be, saying "I make the sacrifice to go to church every weekend," but not really being open to what God wants to teach you; making the sacrifice to drive your kids around to their events, but not affirming or interacting with them; or "I make the sacrifice to be around people to make friends," but don't engage others and be friendly, etc.

2. Chris talked about the confidence we can have to no longer hide from God and be real about what's going on in our lives. How do the following Scriptures help encourage us to not hide, but be honest and move confidently toward God?

Hebrews 4:14-16 – ¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of

grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Jesus can relate to what we're going through.

Additional Question: *Some would say Jesus was God, so this passage doesn't really help. Agree / Disagree? What people don't realize is that Jesus did not take advantage of himself being God so he could fully relate to us; he served as he calls us to serve, and takes on our sin (Philippians 2:6-8).*

Philippians 2:6-8

⁶ *Who, being in very nature God,*

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ *rather, he made himself nothing*

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

⁸ *And being found in appearance as a man,*

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

Psalm 32:3-5 - ³When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.

⁵Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the Lord."

And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

Our life is heavy with unconfessed sin.

James 4:6 - ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

God's favor follows as we confess our sin.

Additional Question: *Which of these verses is most helpful to you in being honest with God?*

3. It can be humbling when we realize Jesus takes us, flaws and all, and gives us a new identity. No matter what we've done in the past or how little or far off the path we've gone, we have an amazing God that wants to come alongside and help. How could the following verses help someone who is struggling to embrace their new label and identity in Christ to walk by faith?

Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 - ²¹ Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

John 15:15 - I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Number these verses from 1-4 in order of importance to you when thinking about your new identity in Christ.

This is a good question to have everyone answer.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking back at this week's teaching and study, what one thing is most important for you to remember and why?

2. Are there any changes you'd like to make as a result of this week's message and study?

Praise/Prayer Requests:



THE DAILY DOSE – Use your cell phone to text the keyword “daily” to 51400 to receive a daily text message with a link to a quick video devotional during the “Identity Theft” sermon series. Standard text rates apply. Questions? Email info@northcoastchurch.com



GREEN OAK RANCH GARDEN BEAUTIFICATION – On Saturday, Nov. 11, 8am-12pm, we could use help from about 30- 60 people. Duties may include: gardening, planting, weeding, raking paths, hauling away debris, painting and basic landscaping. Our Team Leader is John Westbrook.

Sign up at <http://northcoastcommunityservice.org/organization/green-oak-ranch/>

- **Date/Time:** Saturday, Nov. 11, 8am-12pm
- **Meet:** 1237 Green Oak Road in Vista, CA 92081
- **Bring:** Gloves, hats, closed-toe shoes, sunblock & water
- **Child Friendly:** Yes, but we ask for parental supervision at all times
- **Tools to Bring:** Rakes, shovels, hand trowels, hand clippers of any size, brooms, dust pans & wheelbarrows

A Battle Of Two Truths

Believing The Lie:

Genesis 3

The problem:

- ✓ Following the **lie** brought a new **truth** about us.
Not only have we done **bad**...we are **bad**.
- ✓ Our guilt and shame have become our **new identity**.

The result:

- ✓ We hide from **ourselves**, **others** and **God**.

Reclaiming What Was Stolen:

Psalm 139, 32, 51; 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 & 14-21, 10:5; 1 John 1:9, 3:1-6, 4:7-21
John 8:31-36; Hebrews 4:16; Romans 8:9-17

The answer: Choose to walk by **faith** not **sight**.

Sight = Blame **others** for where we **are today**.
Faith = Own what we **have done** and **confess it**.

Sight = Believe that we are what we **have done**.
Faith = Daily remind ourselves of how **God sees us**.

Sight = Continue to hide from **ourselves**, **others** and **God**.
Faith = Accept a **greater truth** and live in that **light**.